



The Sunflower Fund
Hope begins with you

MEDIA RELEASE

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PARTNERSHIP TO GROW AFRICAN STEM CELL DONOR REGISTRY, GIVES PATIENTS A GREATER HOPE OF FINDING A LIFE-SAVING MATCH

[**Cape Town**, January 2018] South African NGO The Sunflower Fund and Ghanaian NGO The Moore Foundation have signed a memorandum of understanding to increase the number of registered bone marrow/ blood stem cell donors from Ghana and to grow the registry for Africa.

The Sunflower Fund is a donor recruitment centre and registry that fights blood diseases like leukaemia, aplastic anaemia and sickle cell disease – to name a few – by growing and maintaining a registry of donors committed to helping anyone in need of a life-saving blood stem cell transplant.

The Moore Foundation is a charitable organisation in Ghana which is focused on supporting and assisting children under 18 years old who have been diagnosed with leukaemia and their families.

Given the synergies between the two organisations, they've entered into a partnership to bring about greater collaboration to increase the impact in the lives of patients which they serve.

The partnership will see The Sunflower Fund supporting The Moore Foundation with creating education and awareness about the need for bone marrow/ blood stem cell donors and well as jointly fundraising for the recruitment of donors and growing a patient support fund, which can be extended to Ghanaian patients and their families.

All Ghanaian donors will be tested at 11 Loci and will be uploaded to The Sunflower Fund's Stem Cell Registry.

According to the 2015 revision of the UN World Population prospects' key findings, Africa's share of the global population is projected to grow to 25 per cent in 2050. Research shows that the genetic 'distances' between African populations are greater than those observed between European populations. This genetic diversity in African populations poses practical challenges for the transplantation medical community to find HLA matched unrelated donors for patients in need of life-saving stem cell transplants.

When it comes to matching human leukocyte antigen (HLA) types, a patient's ethnic background is important in the possibility of finding a match. This is because HLA markers used in matching are inherited. Some ethnic groups have more complex tissue types than others. So a person's best chance of finding a donor may be with someone of the same ethnic background.

"Recruiting from a broader donor pool and actively maintaining a registry of committed donors increases the opportunity for search and match optimisation," says Alana James CEO of The Sunflower Fund. "As such, we are excited about this partnership to expand our recruitment footprint thereby increasing a patient's chance of finding a match and making it to transplant," James added.

The Sunflower Fund NPC, Reg. No: 2000/008979/08, VAT Reg. No. 4350236958
Non-Profit Organisation Reg. No.: 020-728-NPO
Public Benefit Organisation (section 18A) Reg. No : 130000158
In Terms of Section 18A(2) of the Income Tax, No. 58 of 1962

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“The realisation of having leukemia, can psychologically break a child and leave his family devastated. This, we deeply bemoan, given that children are full of potential, and should be given as much hope as possible to face the future,” says Patrick Moore, CEO and Founder of the Moore Foundation. “We anticipate with excitement the direct positive impact this collaboration will have on patients and the transplantation community across Africa,” he concluded.

Anyone between the ages of 18-45 years with a weight of more than 50kgs and a BMI of less than 40 can register as a donor.

For more information or to support The Sunflower Fund visit www.sunflowerfundregistry.com or call 0800 12 10 82.

To find out more about The Moore Foundation visit www.lifeandmoore.org.

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